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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 001772

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [TH](#) [PSI](#)

SUBJECT: THAILAND: PSI - SECURING THAI ENDORSEMENT

REF: STATE 39747

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RALPH L. BOYCE. REASON 1.4(D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Ambassador delivered reftel demarche to Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai on March 9. Surakiart said the RTG could not provide a definitive response over the next few days because the new government was in the process of being formed. Surakiart indicated that he would personally follow through to get Thai endorsement of the PSI Statement of Principles (SOP); however, endorsement remains unlikely before the March 21-22 PSI OEG in Omaha. Embassy recommends that we do not exclude the Thai from the Omaha meeting, given the expectation that they will in fact endorse the SOP in the near future. END SUMMARY

2. (C) While waiting for his audience with the King to formally present his credentials March 9, the Ambassador discussed the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and Thai endorsement of the PSI Statement of Principles (SOP) with Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai. Ambassador used reftel talking points to emphasize the importance the U.S. and 20 other PSI member nations place on endorsements of the SOP.

3. (C) Surakiart said he was familiar with the issue, but asked for additional time to consult with his staff before giving the Ambassador a definitive response. Surakiart noted that many Thai government agencies had equities associated with PSI and some still had concerns with details of PSI activities. Surakiart said he had approached the PSI process to date as a "confidence building" exercise for the concerned agencies to get comfortable with the initiative and to try to come to a consensus within the intra-agency process.

4. (C) Ambassador reminded the Foreign Minister that Thailand has been working on the PSI issue for over a year and that we believed it was time for the RTG to come to a final decision on formally endorsing the SOP. Ambassador noted that the March 21-22 meeting in Omaha was rapidly approaching, and Thailand remained the only participating country that had not formally endorsed the PSI Statement of Principles. The Ambassador reiterated that the SOP, while non-binding, is a political commitment to take action. The Ambassador emphasized that endorsement of the SOP was a critical component of Thailand's continued participation with PSI.

5. (C) Surakiart replied, "give me a few days." The Foreign Minister said that before he could move forward with the intra-agency coordination process to reach the final decision the new cabinet needed to be formally named and sworn in. (NOTE: Prime Minister Thaksin, who was reelected in national elections on February 6, was sworn in for his second term on March 9. He is expected to name his new cabinet on March 11. The new cabinet will be sworn in on March 14, so the likely first cabinet meeting will be March 15. END NOTE) Surakiart predicted he would be able to forge a consensus on the SOP "in a few days" after the cabinet was formed, implying he would personally take charge of the effort.

6. (C) COMMENT: Surakiart did not seem pessimistic about Thailand's eventual endorsement of the PSI SOP. But with the new cabinet not being named until March 11, followed by formalities associated with the early days of the new term, we are unlikely to see any formal moment on PSI (or other issues for that matter), until March 15 at the earliest. It will be difficult to get the Thais to move before March 21. Though the timing remains difficult, Embassy believes the RTG will formally endorse the SOP in the relatively near term. Working level contacts at the MFA have told us in informal conversations that the policy decision within MFA to endorse the SOP has been made. However, turf-conscious bureaucrats within the operational ministries are holding up the endorsement. Nevertheless, we expect Surakiart to follow through and deliver the endorsement and recommend that we do not exclude the Thai from participating in the Omaha OEG meeting. END COMMENT
BOYCE